

REMARKS

Applicant has carefully reviewed the Examiner's rejections and comments as found in the Office Action dated 10 November 2005 and provides the following remarks regarding the Office Action. The Applicant further wishes to thank the Examiner for the 23 February 2006 telephone interview to discuss the present office action and proposed amendments to the claims. Claims 1 - 22 are pending in this application.

Claim Rejection - 35 USC §102(b)

In the Office Action, the Examiner has rejected Claims 11, 12, 16, and 17 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Heap (U.S. Pat. No. 6,261,141). This rejection is respectfully traversed. For a *prima facie* case of anticipation to be established, the Examiner must show that, each and every element as set forth in the claim is found, either expressly or inherently described, in a single prior art reference. (MPEP 2131) Applicant respectfully submits that the Heap reference does not teach each and every element of the claims as amended herein, and thus does not establish a *prima facie* case of anticipation.

The Applicant has amended independent Claims 11 and 17 to include the limitation that the shaft has a recessed portion that is a lesser diameter than the shaft diameter thereby creating at least one transverse ridge at the junction of the shaft diameter and the at least one recessed portion. In addition, Claims 11 and 17 have been amended to include the limitation that the handlebar grip interlocks into the recessed portion of the shaft and that the at least one transverse ridge and surface profiles interlock longitudinally and laterally the handlebar grip to the shaft. (See Pg. 5, Ln. 1 - Pg. 5, Ln. 23; FIGS. 7 - 9)

Heap teaches shows a hand grip that is attached to a shaft devoid of a recessed portion, thus it does not teach the element of having at least one recessed portion on the shaft. In addition, Heap does not teach at least one transverse ridge for interlocking longitudinally the handlebar grip to the shaft. Also, Heap teaches other shafts having a cross-section of different shapes, such as square, oval, or polygonal. These shapes do not teach a shaft that includes a surface profile located on the at least one recessed portion and a handlebar grip having a complimentary surface profile to removably interlock the handlebar grip to the at least one recessed portion as found in the amended Claims 11 and 17. The grip and shaft arrangement taught by Heap would not prevent the grip from sliding longitudinally along the shaft during use.

For the reasons stated above with respect to Heap in light of amended independent Claims 11 and 17, Applicant respectfully submits that Heap does not form the basis of a *prima facie* case of anticipation of independent Claims 11 and 17. Therefore, it is believed that Claims 11 and 17 are

allowable under 35 U.S.C. §102(b). Claims 12 and 16 depend from and include all the limitations of amended Claim 11, thus they are also believed to be allowable under 35 U.S.C. §102(b).

Claim Rejection – 35 USC §103(a)

The Examiner rejected Claims 13 and 14 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Heap in view of Bruce (U.S. Pat. No. D320,375). This rejection is respectfully traversed. For a *prima facie* case of obviousness to be established, the Examiner must show that one or more references that were available to the inventor meet three basic criteria. First, there must be some suggestion or motivation, either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, to modify the reference or to combine reference teachings. Second, there must be a reasonable expectation of success. Finally, the prior art reference (or references when combined) must teach or suggest all the claim limitations. (MPEP 2142) Applicant respectfully submits that the Heap reference in view of the Bruce reference neither forms the basis of nor establishes a *prima facie* case of obviousness.

Claims 13 and 14 depend from and include all the limitations of the amended independent Claim 11. Bruce teaches a bent shaft, thus in combination with Heap, as discussed above, they do not teach all the claim limitations found in amended independent Claim 11.

For the reasons stated above with respect to Heap in view of Bruce and in light of amended independent Claim 11, Applicant respectfully submits that Heap in view of Bruce does not form the basis of a *prima facie* case of anticipation of independent Claim 11 nor dependent Claims 13 and 14. Therefore, it is believed that Claims 13 and 14 are allowable under 35 U.S.C. §103(a).

Claim Rejection – 35 USC §103(a)

The Examiner rejected Claim 15 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Heap in view of Gunnell (U.S. Pat. No. 6,328,617). This rejection is respectfully traversed. Applicant respectfully submits that the Heap reference in view of the Gunnell reference neither forms the basis of nor establishes a *prima facie* case of obviousness.

Claim 15 depends from and includes all the limitations of the amended independent Claim 11. Gunnell teaches a composite construction, thus in combination with Heap, they do not teach all the claim limitations found in amended independent Claim 11.

For the reasons stated above with respect to Heap in view of Gunnell and in light of amended independent Claim 11, Applicant respectfully submits that Heap in view of Gunnell does not form the basis of a *prima facie* case of anticipation of independent Claim 11 nor dependent Claim 15. Therefore, it is believed that Claim 15 is allowable under 35 U.S.C. §103(a).

Claim Rejection – 35 USC §103(a)

The Examiner rejected Claims 1 - 6, 10, and 18 - 22 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Abbenhouse et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,796,862) in view of Heap. This rejection is respectfully traversed. Applicant respectfully submits that the Abbenhouse et al. reference in view of the Heap reference neither forms the basis of nor establishes a *prima facie* case of obviousness.

The Applicant has amended independent Claims 11 and 17 to include the limitation that the shaft has a recessed portion that is a lesser diameter than the shaft diameter thereby creating at least one transverse ridge at the junction of the shaft diameter and the at least one recessed portion. In addition, Claims 11 and 17 have been amended to include the limitation that the handlebar grip interlocks into the recessed portion of the shaft and that the at least one transverse ridge and surface profiles interlock longitudinally and laterally the handlebar grip to the shaft. (See Pg. 5, Ln. 1 - Pg. 5, Ln. 23; FIGS. 7 - 9)

Heap teaches shows a hand grip that is attached to a shaft devoid of a recessed portion, thus it does not teach the element of having at least one recessed portion on the shaft. In addition, Heap does not teach at least one transverse ridge for interlocking longitudinally the handlebar grip to the shaft. Also, Heap teaches other shafts having a cross-section of different shapes, such as square, oval, or polygonal. These shapes do not teach a shaft that includes a surface profile located on the at least one recessed portion and a handlebar grip having a complimentary surface profile to removably interlock the handlebar grip to the at least one recessed portion as found in the amended Claims 11 and 17. The grip and shaft arrangement taught by Heap would not prevent the grip from sliding longitudinally along the shaft during use.

In addition, Abbenhouse et al. reference does not teach a blade with a skeleton that has at least one rib that extends distally from the longitudinal centerline of the skeleton to the outer periphery of the blade to reinforce the blade both longitudinally and laterally. Claim 18 has been amended to include the limitation that the skeleton has at least one rib that extends distally from the longitudinal centerline of the skeleton to the outer periphery of the paddle blade. Therefore, the combination of the Abbenhouse et al. reference and the Heap reference do not teach each and every claim element as found in the amended independent Claims 11, 17, and 18.

For the reasons stated above with respect to the Abbenhouse et al. reference in view of the Heap reference, and in light of amended independent Claims 11, 17, and 18 Applicant respectfully submits that these two references do not form the basis of a *prima facie* case of obviousness of independent Claims 11, 17, and 18. Therefore, it is believed that Claims 11, 17, and 18 are allowable under 35 U.S.C. §103(a). Claims 2 - 6, 10, and 19 - 22 depend from and include all the limitations

of amended Claims 11, 17, and 18, thus they are also believed to be allowable under 35 U.S.C. §103(a).

Claim Rejection – 35 USC §103(a)

The Examiner rejected Claims 7 and 8 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Heap in view of Abbenhouse et al. as applied to Claim 1 above, and further in view of Bruce. This rejection is respectfully traversed. Applicant respectfully submits that the Heap reference in view of the Abbenhouse et al. reference, and further in view of the Bruce reference neither forms the basis of nor establishes a *prima facie* case of obviousness.

For the reasons stated above with respect to the Heap reference in view of the Abbenhouse et al. reference as applied to Claim 1 above, and further in view of Bruce, and in light of amended independent Claim 1, Applicant respectfully submits that these three references do not form the basis of a *prima facie* case of obviousness of independent Claim 1. Therefore, it is believed that Claim 1 is allowable under 35 U.S.C. §103(a). Claims 7 and 8 depend from and include all the limitations of amended Claim 1, thus they are also believed to be allowable under 35 U.S.C. §103(a).

Claim Rejection – 35 USC §103(a)

The Examiner rejected Claim 9 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Heap in view of Abbenhouse et al. as applied to Claim 1 above, and further in view of Gunnell. This rejection is respectfully traversed. Applicant respectfully submits that the Heap reference in view of the Abbenhouse et al. reference, and further in view of the Gunnell reference neither forms the basis of nor establishes a *prima facie* case of obviousness.

For the reasons stated above with respect to the Heap reference in view of the Abbenhouse et al. reference as applied to Claim 1 above, and further in view of Gunnell, and in light of amended independent Claim 1, Applicant respectfully submits that these three references do not form the basis of a *prima facie* case of obviousness of independent Claim 1. Therefore, it is believed that Claim 1 is allowable under 35 U.S.C. §103(a). Claim 9 depends from and includes all the limitations of amended Claim 1, thus it is also believed to be allowable under 35 U.S.C. §103(a).

In addition, Applicant has amended Claims 3 and 20 to clarify that the at least one rib has a wing-shaped cross-section. Also, Claims 3 – 5 have been amended to clarify their dependence upon Claim 1. Claims 8, 10, and 14 have been amended to clarify that the surface profile is located on the at least one recessed portion. Claims 5, 21, and 22 have been amended to clarify the materials claimed for these claims.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicant believes the pending application is in condition for allowance. Applicant believes no fee is due with this response. However, if a fee

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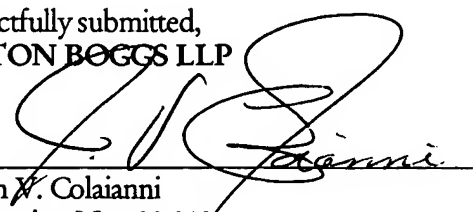
Docket No.: 022306.0101PTUS

is due, please charge our Deposit Account No. 50-2816, under Order No. 022306.0101PTUS from which the undersigned is authorized to draw.

Dated: 4/10/06

Customer No. 41434

Respectfully submitted,
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